
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Correlates of Sports Confidence among High School Athletes

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the correlates of sports confidence among high school athletes. The study examined Vealey's (1986) nine sources of sports confidence in relation to contextual factors of gender, age, playing experience and type of sport. A descriptive survey design was used, and data were collected using Vealey's Sources of sports confidence questionnaire (SSCQ) from high school athletes (n=175). Results showed that coaches' leadership was the highest source of sports confidence, followed by mastery and physical and mental preparation, while situational favourableness appeared to be the weakest source of confidence amongst the athletes. There were significant differences in physical self-presentation ($t=-2.14$, $df = 173$, $p = 0.034$) in favour of male athletes. Athletes participating in individual sports had superior scores in mastery, while coaches' leadership was the most important source of sports confidence for athletes in team sports. There were significant differences in coaches' leadership ($t=-3.118$, $df = 175$, $p = 0.002$) and social support ($t=-2.236$, $df = 175$, $p = 0.027$) in favour of athletes in a team sport. Athletes who did not engage in their current sport while in a primary school rated coaches' leadership highly, while mastery of the skill was scored highly by athletes who did participate in the sport while in primary school. It is concluded that coaches' leadership skills, mastery of skill execution and physical or mental preparedness were the major sources of sports confidence. High schools should utilize coaches who can be emulated by the athletes.

KEYWORDS

Source of sport confidence, high school, individual, team sport

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1. Introduction

Self-confidence has been described as one of the most important psychological attributes sports performers possess (e.g. Bull et al., 2005; Jones et al., 2007; Vealey & Chase, 2008). According to Vealey (1986), sport confidence is the belief or degree of certainty individuals possess about their ability to be successful in sports. Confidence affects the way one feels and behaves, making it have a great influence on sports performance (Connaughton et al., 2008; Vealey, 2001; Vealey & Chase, 2008). Previous studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between self-confidence and athletic performance (Woodman & Hardy, 2003; Zinsser et al., 2006). Other scholars contend that confidence is the most consistent factor in determining sports success and distinguishes between less successful and more successful athletes (Amasiatu, 2013; Gilson, 2010; Williams & Krane, 2015).

Bandura's (1997) Self-efficacy Theory and the Sports-confidence Model (Vealey, 1986; Vealey & Chase, 2008) have been utilized extensively to study sources of sport confidence in sports. In this regard, Vealey (1998) identified nine sources of sports confidence which include mastery (improving or mastering the required skills), environmental comfort (feeling comfortable with the competition environment), coaches' leadership (believing in the coach's leadership ability), physical/mental preparation (feeling physically and mentally prepared for competition), physical self-presentation (physical image displayed), vicarious experience

(watching others perform successfully), social support (getting positive feedback and encouragement from significant others), and situational favourableness (feeling that the breaks of the situation are going their way).

Studies have shown that athletes derive their confidence from a wide range of sources (Hays et al., 2009). For example, Vealey et al. (1998) found out that mastery, social support, physical and mental preparation, coach leadership and demonstration of ability were the top five sources of sports confidence among high school basketball players. Machida et al. (2012) found the highest-rated sources of sports confidence in terms of importance to be social support, mastery, physical/mental preparation and coaches' leadership among university athletes. This is contrary to Rintaugu et al. (2018) findings that coaches' leadership, vicarious experience, mastery and demonstration of ability were highly rated sources of sports confidence among university athletes. In a similar study, Magyar and Feltz (2003) found that mastery climate, coaches' leadership and social support as the sources of sports confidence. Recently, Greenless et al. (2021) found that key sources of confidence identified by soccer players were performance accomplishments, coaching, social support and preparation, while Amal (2021) reported that the highest sources of sport confidence were identified in physical and mental preparation, social support and vicarious experience while situational favourableness was exhibited as the weakest source of confidence among elite volleyball female players.

The sources of sport confidence among athletes are influenced by demographic variables (e.g. age, gender and ethnicity) and organizational cultural factors such as competitive level, motivational climate and the goals of a particular sports program. According to Bitterlin (2011), parents, siblings, friends, and teachers affect the self-confidence of athletes as they provide support and encouragement, which in turn enhance self-confidence. Moreover, Hays et al. (2009) state that females display potentially lower confidence levels compared to males. As much as females may display lower confidence levels, Balaguer et al. (2004) assert that mental/physical preparation and mastery are stronger sources of sports confidence for female athletes. Other studies have shown that female athletes' sources of sport confidence are mastery, physical self-presentation, social support, environmental comfort and coaches' leadership (Balaguer, 2004; Hays et al., 2007; Rock & Jones, 2002; Kingston et al., 2010; Vealey et al., 1998). Female athletes also perceive physical appearance as an important aspect of sports and one that gives them confidence (Miller, 2018). This is contrary to Krane and Williams (1994), who report physical self-presentation as the least source of sports confidence among male and female high school athletes. Other studies have shown that male athletes have more confidence than females (Hays et al., 2009; Jamshaid & Muhammad, 2011; Lochbaum et al., 2022). For example, Rintaugu et al. (2018) found that male athletes scored highly in most of the sources of sports confidence, except for mastery, physical and mental preparation and social support, where the females scored highly. Hays et al. (2007) found that male athletes had their coach as the main source of sports confidence. This makes coaches' leadership a key component of performance among male athletes (Feltz & Lirgg, 2001; Feltz et al., 2008). However, Sudheesh (2017) found that there were significant differences in the sources of sports confidence in social support, coaches' leadership, environmental comfort and situation favourableness among intervarsity handball players in favour of female athletes.

Studies have shown that athletes who have more playing experience display higher levels of sport confidence (Bajpai & Sultana, 2015; Hossein et al., 2013; Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2002; Lochbaum et al., 2022; Maher, 2016; Vanderhoof, 2017) than those with a shorter playing experience. This is attributed to the fact that elite athlete develops their confidence through training schedules and the number of games played. For example, Vealey et al. (1998) found that youth athletes identified more with coaches' leadership, mastery and social support as sources of sports confidence compared to high school and college athletes. High school athletes viewed the coach as the most important person in enhancing sports confidence (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010). Machida (2008) reported that adult athletes associated more with physical/mental preparation as a source of sports confidence and that coaches' leadership ability was less important to them than to high school athletes. The shift in dependency was associated with the playing experience. As players keep on playing games and gaining years of experience, the importance of the coaches' leadership reduces (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010). Indeed, Rintaugu et al. (2018) reported that athletes who had prior engagements in the game (had played the sport in high school) posted higher scores in mastery, physical and mental preparation, social support and vicarious experience as sources of sports confidence. On the other hand, Abdolalizadeh et al. (2010) found situational favourability to be the least important source of sports confidence among young Iranian wrestlers, while Sudheesh (2017) found physical self-presentation as the least source of sports confidence among intervarsity handball players.

There is a continuous debate on whether sources of sport confidence are mediated by the type of sport. On the one hand, Woodman and Hardy (2003) opined that self-confidence is more important to participants in individual sports than those in team sports. On the other hand, studies have found that team sports players have higher levels of self-confidence compared to players in individual sports (Cavusoglu et al., 2017; Kajbafnezhad et al., 2011; Radzi et al., 2013; Zeng, 2003). Kajbafnezhad et al. (2011) reported that athletes in team sports had higher scores on the sources of sports confidence compared to athletes in individual sports. Team sports have been associated with increased self-confidence and improved social abilities (Sabiston et al., 2016; Vella et al., 2017). Other studies report that there is no significant difference in the sources of confidence between athletes in team sports and individual sports (Maher, 2016; Nicholls et al., 2009). Clark (2013) and Jacques (2013) revealed that athletes in individual sports placed significantly more importance on mastery than athletes in team sports.

The above literature shows that sources of sports confidence vary based on the type of sports played (Cavusoglu et al., 2017; Frowen, 2014; Kajbafnezhad et al., 2011; Nafian et al., 2014; Omarsson, 2013; Radzi et al., 2013; Sabiston et al., 2016; Vella et al., 2017), gender (Hays, 2009; Jamshaid et al., 2011; Kingston et al., 2010; Rintaugu et al., 2018) and playing experience (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010; Bajpai, 2015; Hossein et al., 2013; Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2002; Maher, 2016; Rintaugu et al., 2018). Most of the above studies have been conducted from the West, and thus it was apt to establish the sources of sport confidence among high school athletes in Kenya.

Participation in sports and games at the secondary school level continues to be encouraged due to the perceived outcomes and benefits. In order to heighten participation, sports competitions are organized by school authorities from the intramural to the intermural. Schools ensure that the athletes and teams compete at the highest level possible. Several studies have been conducted among athletes representing their secondary schools in sports competitions on different psychological constructs in Kenya (Andanje, 2018; Gitonga, 1998; Kimengi et al., 2014; Mwihiaki, 2007; Muniu, 2009; Rintaugu, 2005). For example, Kimengi et al. (2014) addressed sports participation and self-concept among high school athletes, while Andanje (2018) focused on the motivation for competitive soccer among student-athletes in public secondary schools in Kenya. Therefore it is apparent that there are no studies which have been conducted on the sources of sport confidence among high school athletes in Kenya. This is not remote, as studies on sources of sport confidence among high school athletes in many developing countries are scarce. Therefore the purpose of this study was to establish the correlates of sources of sports confidence among high school athletes and to find out whether the sources of sport confidence were mediated by gender, playing experience and type of sport. The study was apt as it could inform high school coaches on how to improve the training and preparation of their athletes for various sports competitions with regard to optimising sports confidence. This will improve the level of participation and competitiveness and reduce the stress associated with sports training and competition. The findings in this study have practical implications for high school athletes' preparation for sports competitions.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design and Participants' Characteristics

A descriptive survey design was employed and targeted high school athletes who had participated in secondary school sports competitions organized by the Kenya Secondary School Sports Association (KSSSA). The student-athletes participated in individual (athletics, badminton, table tennis, field events, tennis and swimming) and team sport (football, netball, volleyball, basketball, hockey, rugby and handball). Stratified sampling was used to ensure equal representation in terms of type of sport and gender. The study targeted 283 participants, but 175 questionnaires were completely filled out and returned. This included 100 (57.14%) males and 75 (42.86%) females. The majority of the athletes, 126 (72%), were aged between 16 and 17 years and were followed by those aged between 18 and 19 years, 29 (16.57%), and those aged 14-15 years, 20 (11.42%). In regards to participation in sports while in primary school, 109 (62.29%) of the athletes had participated, while 66 (37.71%) did not participate in sports. In terms of playing experience, 71 (40.57%) of the athletes have been actively involved in the sport for at least three years, 50 (28.57%) for more than four years, 45 (25.71%) for two years, and 9 (5.14%) of the athletes had been in the sport for less than one year. Those involved in individual sports were 48 (27.42%), while those in team sports were 127 (72.57%).

2.2. Research Instruments and Data Collection

Data was collected using the sources of the sports confidence questionnaire (SSCQ) (Vealey, 1988). The questionnaire had two sections: Section A sought to capture the demographic information of the athletes, such as age, gender, type of sport, number of years in the sport, and participation/non-participation in sport while in primary school. Section B had forty-one (41) items that represent the nine sources of sports confidence in sports. These include Mastery of skill execution (five items), vicarious experience (five items), coach's leadership (five items), social support (six items), demonstration of ability (five items), mental and physical preparation (six items), environmental comfort (three items), situational favourability (three items) and physical self-presentation (three items). The items were scored on a scale ranging from 1-7, where 1 represented 'not at all important', and 7 represented 'very important'. Vealey et al. (1998) reported acceptable internal reliability scores (Cronbach alpha) for the nine sources of sport confidence of between .71 and .93, and the initial support for content and construct validity was established for high school and college athletes. In the current study, the test-retest technique was used among 20 respondents at a two weeks interval to establish the reliability of the instrument and returned a .83 Cronbach alpha index, which was considered adequate for the study.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Recreation and Sport Management of Kenyatta University. School principals, games teachers and athletes were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and athletes could pull out of the study with no consequences. Informed consent was obtained from the athletes according to established guidelines (Thomas et al., 2011), where participants signed consent forms before taking part in the study. Questionnaires were administered to the players in the playing fields/courts with the assistance of coaches and game teachers.

The player’s responses were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics of means and percentages. The Likert values for each of the sources of confidence in sport were converted into linear percentages of maximum possible (POMP) scores as recommended by Cohen et al. (1999). Independent sample T-tests were used to determine if there were any significant differences in the sources of sports confidence based on gender, type of sport, and participation/nonparticipation in sport while in primary school and playing experience.

3. Results

The summary scores of the athletes on sources of confidence percentage of maximum possible (POMP) are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The Percentage of the maximum possible (POMP) scores (means and standard deviations) for various sources of sports confidence (n = 175)

Source of sports confidence	Mean	SD
Coaches Leadership	83.3	12.6
Mastery	82.7	9.6
Physical and Mental Preparation	80.6	10.2
Environmental Comfort	79.2	11
Social support	77.9	11.9
Demonstration of Ability	75	13.8
Vicarious Experience	74.9	13.6
Physical Self-Presentation	74.7	17.2
Situational Favourableness	73.2	17

Results in Table 2 show that based on the POMP scores, the highest-rated sources of sports confidence are coaches’ leadership, mastery and physical and mental preparation, while the lowest-rated sources of sports confidence were situational favourableness, physical self-presentation and vicarious experience. The participant’s Percentage of maximum possible (POMP) scores for sources of sports confidence based on their gender is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: POMP score (means and standard deviations) and t-test results for sources of sports confidence based on gender (n=175)

Sources of Sports Confidence	Female		Male		t	Df	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Coaches Leadership	83	14.6	83.7	14.6	-0.376	175	0.708
Mastery	83	9.5	82.3	9.5	0.442	175	0.659
Physical and Mental Preparation	79.6	10	82	10	-1.581	175	0.116
Environmental Comfort	78	11.8	80.7	11.8	-1.576	175	0.117
Social support	77	12.3	79	12.3	-1.131	175	0.26
Demonstration of Ability	73.7	14.9	76.6	14.9	-1.398	175	0.164
Vicarious Experience	73.5	14.9	76.7	14.9	-1.549	175	0.123
Physical Self-Presentation	72.3	18.1	77.8	18.1	-2.141	175	0.034
Situational Favourableness	71.9	17.4	74.9	17.4	-1.128	175	0.261

Results in Table 3 indicate that the highest sources of confidence among male athletes were coaches’ leadership, mastery and physical and mental preparation, while the least source was situational favourableness. For the female athletes, the sources of confidence waned from coaches’ leadership, mastery and physical and mental preparation, while situational favourableness was the least source of sports confidence. The males had higher means in all the sources of sports confidence than the females, except for mastery. However, the t-test returned significant differences in physical self-presentation (t=-2.14, p =0.034) in favour of male athletes. The participant’s percentage of maximum possible (POMP) scores for sources of sports confidence based on the type of sport is presented in Table 4

Table 4: Comparison of POMP scores on sources of sport confidence based on the type of sport (n=175)

Sources of Sports Confidence	Individual Sport		Team Sport		T	Df	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Coaches Leadership	77.9	13.8	84.8	13.8	-3.118	175	0.002
Social support	74.2	12.5	78.9	12.5	-2.236	175	0.027
Vicarious Experience	72.5	14.2	75.6	14.2	-1.23	175	0.22
Mastery	80.5	9.6	83.3	9.6	-1.621	175	0.107
Environmental Comfort	76.3	12.5	80	12.5	-1.872	175	0.063
Demonstration of Ability	72.7	12.2	75.6	12.2	-1.145	175	0.254
Physical and Mental Preparation	78.6	10.8	81.2	10.8	-1.384	175	0.168
Physical Self-Presentation	70.2	14.8	75.9	14.8	-1.853	175	0.066
Situational Favourableness	70.9	16.3	73.8	16.3	-0.96	175	0.339

Results in Table 4 indicate that the sources of sports confidence for athletes in individual sports were mastery, physical/mental preparation and coaches' leadership, while athletes in team sports posted high scores on coaches' leadership, mastery, and physical and mental preparation. Therefore it appears that athletes in the Individual sport had lower scores on sources of sports confidence compared to athletes in team sports. The t-results showed that there were no significant differences ($p > .05$) in the sources of sports confidence between athletes in individual and those in team sports, except for coaches' leadership ($t = -3.118$, $df = 175$, $p = 0.002$) and social support ($t = -2.236$, $df = 175$, $p = 0.027$). In the two sources of sport confidence, athletes in team sports had higher mean scores than athletes in individual sports. The participant's Percentage of the maximum possible (POMP) scores for sources of sports confidence based on participation in sports in primary school is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison of POMP mean scores (t-test) for the various sources of sport confidence for athletes who participated in the sport in primary school and those who did not (n=175).

Sources of Sports Confidence	Did not play in primary		Played in primary		t	Df	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Coaches' Leadership	84.3	11.8	82.7	11.8	0.813	175	0.417
Social support	76.5	10.6	78.7	10.6	-1.171	175	0.243
Vicarious Experience	74.1	13.9	75.4	13.9	-0.591	175	0.555
Mastery	82.3	9.9	83	9.9	-0.471	175	0.638
Environmental Comfort	80.5	10.1	78.3	10.1	1.262	175	0.209
Demonstration of Ability	72.8	15.1	76.3	15.1	-1.656	175	0.099
Physical and Mental Preparation	80	9.5	81	9.5	-0.644	175	0.521
Physical Self-Presentation	73.2	17.3	75.6	17.3	-0.887	175	0.377
Situational Favourableness	73.9	15.8	72.8	15.8	0.426	175	0.671

Results in Table 5 show that athletes who participated in the sport while in primary school had high scores on mastery, coaches' leadership and physical and mental preparation, while those who did not participate in the sport while in primary school had high scores on coaches' leadership, mastery and environmental comfort. Athletes who participated in the sport while in primary school scored higher means compared to those who did not participate in the sport while in primary school except for coaches' leadership, environmental comfort and situational favourableness. However, there were no significant differences ($p > .05$) in the sources of sports confidence for those who played in primary school and those who did not.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to establish the correlates of sources of sport confidence of high school athletes who were participating in secondary school games in both individual (swimming, athletics, badminton, table tennis, tennis) and team sports (soccer, basketball, handball, hockey, rugby(boys only), volleyball, netball(girls only)). Participation in sports involves many processes, and these can significantly impact the adolescent formation and changes in self-confidence (Gasic-Paviscic, 2006). Adolescent participation in sports improves self-confidence and, in turn, improves athletic performance (Biddle, 2000; Fox, 2000; Gasic-Paviscic, 2006). Adachi (2013) opines that if athletes are encouraged to get involved in sports that they immensely enjoy at a

young age, they experience increased self-esteem, which boosts their chances of competing effectively in their adult or professional years.

Based on the sources of sport confidence of the high school athletes, findings showed that coaches' leadership skills, mastery and physical or mental preparedness were the major sources of sports confidence among the high school athletes. These findings are similar to those of previous studies, which reported that coaches' leadership, mastery and physical or mental preparedness as key sources of sports confidence (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010; Amal, 2021; Balagner et al., 2004; Hays et al., 2007; Hays et al., 2009; Magyar & Feltz, 2003; Rintaugu et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2019). These findings resonate with those of Thomas et al. (2019) and Greenless et al. (2021), where the most frequently cited sources of confidence among elite junior soccer players were accomplishments, social support and preparation. Coaches' leadership (believing in the coaches' leadership ability) is an important source of sports confidence for high school athletes. This is attributed to the fact that athletes interact with the coach more than any other individual in the game. Secondly, coaches play a huge role in shaping the skills of athletes by encouraging them and making them believe in themselves and become confident (Potter, 2019). In this regard, Greenless et al. (2021) opine that sources of confidence are not universal, and they may be influenced by internal factors such as motivation levels and external factors such as coaching climate. Mastery (improving or mastering the required skill) was ranked the second most important source of sports confidence. The athletes at this level are still at the developmental level; hence, skill execution is a very important aspect of their learning process. Wilson et al. (2004) also reported mastery and physical or mental preparedness as the highest-ranked sources. Physical self-presentation and situational favourability were the least sources of sports confidence among high school athletes. This is replicated in Sudheesh's (2017) and Amal's (2021) findings that physical self – presentation was the least source of sports confidence for female and male athletes, while situational favourability (gaining confidence by feeling that breaks of the situation are going your way) was ranked the lowest source of sports confidence. Previous studies have also reported situational favourability as a weak source of sports confidence (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010; Amal, 2021; Machida et al., 2012; Rintaugu et al., 2018).

In regards to gender, the highest source of confidence among males and females was coaches' leadership. These findings resonate with those of previous studies which reported coaches' leadership as the highest-rated source of sports confidence for both male and female athletes (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010; Greenless et al., 2021; Hays et al., 2007; Sudheesh, 2017; Vealey et al., 1998). Hays et al. (2007) opine that female athletes view coaches' leadership as the most important source of sports confidence as the coach encourages them and compliments them. On the other hand, Vealey et al. (1998) contend that coaches' leadership is the most important source for male athletes as they derive confidence from the coaches' ability to come up with appropriate training programs. Abdolalizadeh et al. (2010) argue that male athletes believe prescriptive or autocratic coaching style improves their confidence, while female athletes benefit from socially supportive coaching roles. In this regard, female athletes scored higher on mastery as a source of sports confidence compared to male athletes. These findings are congruent with previous studies, which reported mastery as an important source of confidence for female athletes than for male athletes (Hays et al., 2007; Kingston et al., 2010; Vealey et al., 1998). Mastery is important to female athletes since they tend to place more emphasis on performing well and identifying good personal performances.

There was a significant difference in physical self-presentation as a source of sports confidence, where male athletes had higher mean scores than female athletes. This means male athletes concentrate more on their physical conditioning and appearance as opposed to female athletes. Vealey et al. (1998) reported significant gender differences in physical self-presentation. Similarly, Kingston et al. (2010) found that physical self-presentation was a significant source of sports confidence for female athletes than male athletes who had participated in international games. Adolescent male athletes become more confident if they have a muscular v-shaped body with a well-developed upper body (Leit et al., 2001). Ómarsson (2013) found that male athletes had higher scores on physical self-presentation than female athletes among high school athletes.

Athletes in team sports posted higher scores on sources of sports confidence in comparison to athletes in individual sports. These findings resonate with those of previous studies which reported that athletes in team sports were more confident than athletes in individual sports (Cavusoglu et al., 2017; Kajbafnezhad et al., 2011; Radzi et al., 2013). However, there was no significant difference ($p > .05$) in the sources of sports confidence between athletes in individual and team sports except for coaches' leadership and social support, in which athletes in team sports had higher mean scores than those in individual sports. Therefore it appears that coaches' leadership is an important source of confidence to athletes in team sports than those in individual sports, as reported in other studies (Hays et al., 2007; Jacques, 2013). This could be associated with athletes in team sports getting positive feedback and encouragement from teammates, which helps them handle pressure. This was, however, different from a study by Maher (2016) which did not establish any significant difference in the level of self-confidence between athletes in team sports and those in individual sports. On the other hand, athletes participating in individual sports had superior scores in mastery. Mastering the skills in the sport is important to athletes in individual sports due to the nature of their sport, which requires them to perform on their own and not have teammates (Clark 2013; Jacques 2013).

Athletes who participated in the sport while in primary school relied mostly on mastery as their main source of sports confidence, while those who started participating in sports in high school scored highly on coaches' leadership. These findings were similar to previous studies, which reported mastery as an important source of sports confidence for athletes who have been involved in sports for a longer period of time (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2004). It can be postulated that athletes who had not played the game in primary school relied on the coaches' leadership since most of them were at the learning stage and needed constant encouragement and guidance from the coach. Therefore, the coach was a role model and a source of inspiration to the athlete. For the athletes who did not play the sport in primary school, the coach becomes the person who introduced the athlete to the sport. The coach is a fundamental source of sports confidence for young athletes (Abdolalizadeh et al., 2010). Abdolalizadeh et al. (2010) say that the shift in dependency is associated with the playing experience. As players keep on playing and gaining years of experience, the importance of the coaches' leadership reduces.

Athletes who participated in the sports while in primary school displayed higher scores in the sources of sports confidence compared to those who did not participate in the sports while in primary school. This could be so since the more time an athlete spends in a given sport, the more he gets diverse sources that boost their confidence. This was similar to a study carried out by Rintaugu et al. (2018), where findings showed that experience boosted the confidence level of athletes across all sources of sports confidence. This was associated with athletes having diverse sources from which they derive their sports confidence as a result of being in the sport for a long time. Previous studies have also shown that experienced athletes display high levels of sports confidence than beginner athletes (Bajpai & Sultana, 2015; Hossein et al., 2013; Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2002; Maher, 2016). There were no significant differences ($p > .05$) in the sources of sports confidence based on their participation in sports while in primary school. This was similar to Maher (2016), who found that experts and novice athletes differ significantly in their level of self-confidence.

4.1. Limitations

There are other factors that affect the sources of sports confidence of high school athletes, such as the position of play, family background and school traditions and were not included in this study. Future studies may strive to explore whether these factors affect the sources of confidence of high school athletes. The cross-sectional nature of the study may not allow for cause-effect relationships to be asserted. Data for this study was collected from one sports championship, and it will be prudent to find out whether sources of confidence vary based on the seasonality of training and competitions.

4.2. Conclusions and Recommendations.

It is concluded that coaches' leadership skills, mastery of skill execution and physical or mental preparedness were the major sources of sports confidence, while situational favourability is the least source of sports confidence among high school athletes. Both male and female athletes rely mostly on the coaches' leadership and mastery as a source of sports confidence. Athletes in individual sports athletes scored highly on mastery, while team sport athletes rely on coaches' leadership as a source of sports confidence. Athletes who participated in the sport while in primary school scored highly on mastery, while those who start participation while in high school depend most on coaches' leadership as their main source of sports confidence. However, athletes who participated in the sport while in primary school demonstrated higher levels of sports confidence as compared to those who started participation while in high school.

4.3. Recommendations

High school coaches should practice better leadership which can be emulated by the athletes. They should also work towards improving the athlete's mastery of skill execution. This would greatly improve the sports confidence levels of athletes. Given that athlete who participated in games while in primary school displayed higher sources of sport confidence, there is a need to emphasise on early introduction of sports learners. Studies should be done on the sources of sports confidence among athletes at different levels of competition levels such as college, university and the premier league. At the same time, studies on the influence of significant others on the sources of sports confidence among high school athletes should be conducted. Studies on a comparison of sources of sports confidence between contact sports and non-contact sports should be explored.

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